

'Bush may replace Sununu'

LOS ANGELES (R) — President George Bush is considering a White House shake-up that would include replacing John Sununu as chief of staff in an effort to fight a drop in his popularity and growing discontent within his Republican Party, the Los Angeles Times said Saturday. In a report from Washington, the newspaper, quoting unidentified sources, said several Bush advisors say they expect the changes before the end of the year, perhaps as early as next week. Although Mr. Bush has continued to publicly voice support for Mr. Sununu, behind-the-scenes pressure to replace him has come from cabinet members, other presidential advisors and key Republicans in Congress, the newspaper said. The abrasive chief of staff's popularity has faded in almost constant hot water since Mr. Bush chose the former New Hampshire governor for the job after he engineered the president's come-from-behind victory in the state's pivotal 1988 primary election. In April news reports said Mr. Sununu was using a military jet costing \$3,495 an hour for personal trips as well as official business. He used air force planes for more than 60 personal or political trips in two years.

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AMMAN SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1991, JUMADEH AL OULA 25, 1412

Egyptian parliament expels 2 deputies

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's parliament voted by an overwhelming majority Saturday to expel two members of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) for alleged involvement in drug trafficking. A third NDP deputy who had been expected to be expelled with them resigned before the vote. All three, who come from remote border regions of Egypt, have denied the accusations. The scandal, started by the opposition newspaper Al Wafd in July, has shaken a parliament with little experience of controversy. The NDP has an unassailable majority in the 454-member house and its law-making rarely dominates headlines. The parliament voted 421-0 to expel Ayed Suliman and 406-0 to expel Abdul Rahman Abdul-Gawad. The number of abstentions in the two votes was not known. Both men come from the desert region of southern Sinai and Mr. Suliman, a bedouin tribesman, won a medal in the 1957 war. Mohammad Mubarak Mansour prompted the vote by resigning earlier Saturday "for personal reasons." After the vote, Mr. Suliman accused "Israel and its agents" of mounting attacks on him over many years. Mr. Abdul-Gawad said he had been made "a sacrifice to public opinion."

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Cabinet approves amendments

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet, in a meeting Saturday under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, approved an amendment to the Unified Allowance System which applies for civil and military personnel. According to the amendment, employees of all classes will be entitled to a JD 10 allowance as of Jan. 1, 1992. The Cabinet approved an amendment to the rising costs of living regulations which applies to retired army personnel. In addition, the Cabinet approved a draft amendment to the Amman Financial Market (AFM) law. The amendment posits that the AFM's expenses and assets be monitored by the Audit Bureau.

Iran releases Iraqi of German origin

NICOSIA (R) — Iran released an Iraqi prisoner-of-war of German origin Saturday at the request of the German government, the Iranian news agency IRNA said. The prisoner, captured during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980 to 1988, was handed to the German embassy in Tehran, it added. The agency did not name him. It quoted the Foreign Ministry as saying Iran had set him free in recognition of German assistance to Iraqi refugees who fled to Iran after the Gulf war earlier this year. International agencies say Iran is still holding some 30,000 Iraqi prisoners from the war.

Kazakhstan prepares for first election

ALMA ATA, Soviet Union (R) — The ethnically diverse Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan holds its first presidential election Sunday, a vote designed to strengthen the hand of current leader Nursultan Nazarbayev. Mr. Nazarbayev, who recently gained a 90 per cent favourable rating in a local opinion poll, is the only candidate and is expected to win overwhelming approval for his performance as he pushes through far-reaching economic reform. Mr. Kazakhstan and Russia are the only two of the 12 Soviet republics not to have declared independence since a failed Kremlin coup in August. Kazakhstan wants independent status within a Soviet confederation.

Problem sends shuttle home early

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — The space shuttle Atlantis will return to earth four days early because one of three navigating units aboard had failed, Space Agency officials said Saturday. Landing was set for Sunday at Edwards Air Force Base in California, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration said. Atlantis was launched on Nov. 24 on what was to have been a 10-day mission for the Defence Department.

3 killed in Ethiopian clashes

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Three people were killed in clashes between security forces and high school students in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, state television reported on Friday night. It said the deaths occurred earlier Friday when security officers were trying to halt violence instigated by "anti-democracy and anti-peace" students from two schools. It did not say whether those killed were students or security forces. The television said the students had been destroying school property, creating unrest and disrupting classes. It was not clear whether the unrest was politically motivated.

Algeria hunts gunmen

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian troops are reported to have cut off two eastern desert towns in a hunt for marauding gunmen, turned like Afghan guerrillas. The troops Saturday surrounded the two settlements near the Tunisian frontier seeking the killers of three border guards in a pre-dawn attack on Friday, an Algerian radio said. The raid was launched amid an alert for armed Islamic extremists.

U.S. awaits Israeli word on peace talks

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has not heard anything new from Israel about whether Israeli negotiators will show up for next week's Mideast peace talks in Washington, the U.S. State Department said Saturday.

President George Bush wants the talks to begin on Dec. 4. Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinians have all accepted that date but Israel wants to wait until Dec. 9.

"I don't know who's going to show on Dec. 4, but we're going to get the talks going," Mr. Bush said Friday. The first round of the talks was held in Madrid from Oct. 30 to Nov. 3.

Israel's ambassador to Washington, Zalman Shoval, met on Friday with State Department officials and then told reporters that Israel was going to look at all possible suggestions, adding, "We have never said the date was the main issue. We have always said the main issues was direct communication."

A State Department spokesman said nothing more was expected from Israel until after the Israeli cabinet holds its weekly meeting Sunday.

In Tel Aviv, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Friday that Israel would consider sending a low-level advance team to the Washington talks on Dec. 4 if "someone" — apparently the U.S. hosts — proposed the idea. "Discussions are continuing in

Washington, and if something new turns up, something new may happen here also," Mr. Shamir said.

After meeting U.S. officials at the State Department, Israeli Ambassador Zalman Shoval told reporters in Washington it was time for the Americans to stop mediating and for Arabs to talk directly to Israel about dates and venues.

Israeli sources told Reuters that if an understanding could be reached that dates and venues for future talks would be negotiated directly between Israel and the Arabs the second round of talks could go forward on Dec. 4.

The Palestinians have urged the United States to pressure Israel to attend.

Mr. Shamir said he thought a collapse of the peace process was unlikely but said "we are taking into account" a possible public relations fiasco conjured by the prospect of Arab delegations facing empty Israeli chairs.

Israeli leaders indicated that the Jewish state's troubled relations with the United States were at the heart of the deadlock in the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Shamir said American pressure on Israel had caused the Arabs to think they could bypass direct talks and rely on American pressure to get the Jewish state to make concessions.

Ukraine move is not split, Gorbatchev tells Bush

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev told U.S. President George Bush Saturday that a "Yes" vote in the Ukraine's referendum on independence did not mean the republic was making a break from Moscow.

"We will not view a decision of the citizens of the Ukraine in favour of independence as a break from the union," Mr. Gorbachev told Mr. Bush during a telephone conversation.

"To push matters in this direction would mean heading for disaster — for the union, for the Ukraine itself, for Russia, for Europe and the world."

Mr. Gorbachev, whose comments during the 45-minute conversation were reported by TASS news agency, expressed concern this week at reports that Mr. Bush was prepared to recognise Ukrainian independence.

Mr. Demirel's True Path Party and its coalition ally, the Social Democrat Populist Party, now face the hard task of keeping their promises to steer Turkey and our people's," Mr. Demirel told parliament in a brief speech after the vote.

The Motherland Party, defeated in general elections on Oct. 20 after eight years in power, voted against the government. So did the Muslim fundamentalist Welfare Party (RP).

Mr. Demirel's True Path Party

and its coalition ally, the Social

Democrat Populist Party, now

face the hard task of keeping

their promises to steer Turkey

away from threatened recession.

Annual inflation is running at 66.5 per cent, unemployment officially estimated at 8.2 per cent and this year's growth rate may be well under half of 1990's nine per cent.

Outgoing Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, in a debate on the government programme this week, linked it to a "hastily written shopping list" which failed to say how state revenue would be raised to cover the coalition's social and economic commitments.

Mr. Demirel, seven times prime minister, has pledged to draw up a new, more democratic constitution and lift political restrictions still in force since he was ousted by a military coup in 1980.

Many Turks are optimistic at seeing the DYP and SHP work together after the elections on a programme of political reform and economic stability.

The Istanbul stock exchange hit an eight-month high on Tuesday. Despite profit-taking later in the week it closed on Friday 27.8 per cent up on its level of two weeks ago.

Mr. Demirel has accused President Turgut Ozal, who created Motherland in 1983, of abusing his powers and has long sworn to drive him from office before his seven-year term as president expires in 1996.

The next review is due Monday.

Mr. Vorontsov, who will be responsible for the council's work



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Saturday visits the Court of Cassation and the Higher Court of Justice (Petra photo)



Sharif Zeid pledges to uphold equal status for men and women

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Saturday pledged that his government would ensure that men and women are given equal treatment in the eyes of the law in Jordan.

The pledge came during a visit Sharif Zeid paid to the Court of Cassation and the Higher Court of Justice where he met with Abdur Karim Maath, head of the

Court of Cassation, and Rifat Shimout, head of the Higher Court of Justice, to discuss issues concerning their courts.

At the meeting, which was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thousan Hindawi and Minister of Justice Yousef Maadeen, the prime minister was briefed on the

two courts' plans for boosting Jordan's judicial capabilities, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The judges stressed the need

for speeding up work on the new building for the Palace of Justice and a new cadre for judges in Jordan. They also stressed the need for the government to intro-

duce a court inspection system to help advance the performance of the judicial system.

The prime minister said the government will deal with all these issues and will give them the due attention.

He stressed that the government would ensure equal treatment of men and women before the law, Petra said.

Two shot dead in W. Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Unknown assailants Saturday shot and wounded three West Bank Palestinians, Palestinian reporters said.

The Palestinians were shot while driving in the village of Kabiya, 70 kilometres north of Jerusalem, they said.

Israeli soldiers evacuated the wounded to hospital and clamped a curfew on the area, a military spokesman said.

Two bombs exploded near night patrols of Israeli soldiers in the Bureij refugee camp and the town of Deir Al Balah in the Gaza Strip, a military spokesman said.

Two other bombs were defused. There were no casualties.

Strike called

Palestinian hardliners George Habash and Nayeef Hawatmeh have joined forces in opposition to Arab peace talks with Israel.

In a joint statement after a rare meeting in Damascus on Friday they called for a general strike in the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip on Dec. 4, when the United States hopes talks will resume in Washington.

Dr. Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Mr. Hawatmeh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) are the second and third largest groups in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) after Yasser Arafat's Fatah.

The PFLP has boycotted the PLO Executive Committee since negotiations began in Madrid a month ago. Mr. Hawatmeh's group is still attending. Both are based in Syria, which is also taking part in the U.S.-brokered peace talks.

Their statement described the talks as a "new conspiracy" and a "new Camp David" based on Israeli proposals for limited self-rule which had been rejected by Palestinians.

"We call upon our Palestinian people... unify ranks, foil the American attempt to eliminate the Palestinian cause, and continue the uprising to achieve their rights," it added.

The two groups called on Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories to stage a general strike and hoist black flags, sign of mourning, on Dec. 4.

Their organisations made a similar strike call for Oct. 30, the day the Middle East peace conference opened in Madrid, but there was little response in the occupied territories.

The hardliners reject the PLO Executive Committee's decision to let West Bank and Gaza negotiators attend the peace talks in which Israel refuses to meet the PLO.

"Our correspondent in South Lebanon reports that he expects one or two American hostages to be freed soon," a Tehran Times editor in the Iranian capital told Reuters by telephone.

The newspaper will run the story on Sunday, he added.

New releases are widely expected after U.N. troubleshooter Giandomenico Picco came back to the region on a mission to end the whole hostage saga by Christmas.

The three American hostages in Lebanon are Joseph Cicippio, Alan Steen and Terry Anderson.

Once Mr. Picco has met them at a secret rendezvous, the kidnappers usually provide the first public word of an impending release by sending a statement to an international news agency.

Mr. Picco then arranges the handover of the hostage or hostages to Syrian intelligence officers, who transfer them to Damascus.

"Every single release is the result of work... there are no short cuts," Picco said after overseeing the release of Church of England envoy Terry Waite and American Thomas Sutherland on Sept. 12, 1986.

Two-way battle seen on House floor today for speakership

By Mariam M. Shakir

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — New parliamentary alliances were drawn Saturday as two candidates withdrew from the race for the speakership of the Lower House, leaving the field open for a two-way between incumbent Abdul Latif Arabyat, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, and Abdul Majied Shreideh of the 17-member Constitution Bloc.

The first to declare himself out of the race was Suleiman Arar of the 16-member National Bloc in favour of Mr. Shreideh. As a result the political alliance changed.

The new National Constitutional alliance assured Mr. Shreideh of a minimum of 33 votes — the 17 votes from his own bloc and 16 from the National Bloc.

Three deputies from the six-member Independent Islamic Bloc are also expected to vote for Mr. Shreideh. The nomination of independent Islamist Deputy Mahmoud Huwaili for the post of second deputy to the speaker is expected to get the support of the Constitutional-National coalition if Mr. Shreideh becomes speaker.

According to insiders, the National Bloc had four conditions which it pursued with vigour in return for Mr. Arar's stepping down.

"The National Bloc could ask for a lot since the Constitutional Bloc candidates cannot win without them," said

one deputy who has been following the inter-bloc negotiations.

The alliance drawn between the National and Constitutional Bloc was based on an agreement that guarantees a member of the National Bloc the position of first deputy speaker, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the position of speaker during the next parliamentary session, according to the insiders.

The independent Islamists have always given their votes to the candidate that offered them a deputy speakership in the past two elections. During the first speakership election in 1989, the then seven-member bloc gave their votes to Dr. Arabyat after the Brotherhood Bloc promised them the position of first deputy.

Earlier this week, Awni Bashir, one of the six independent Islamist deputies confirmed that his bloc would vote for the candidate that gives them an offer to be a deputy speaker. Since then the Islamist deputies have agreed to disagree and late Saturday Mr. Bashir confirmed that the bloc may not have a unified position.

He is held by the pro-Iranian Revolutionary Justice Organisation.

The diplomats confirmed that Mr. Picco was in the area on Saturday but said his precise movements were a closely guarded secret — as they have been since the United Nations began a drive to free all the hostages last August.

"Picco's back and because of that we expect at least one hostage to be released soon," a Tehran Times editor in the Iranian capital told Reuters by telephone.

"But he has to make the kidnappers move each time. And that is the hard part."

The 42-year-old Italian, who shuttles between Damascus and face-to-face meetings with pro-Iranian kidnappers in Lebanon in the run-up to a release, has an unbroken record of bringing one or more hostages out every time he visits Syria and Lebanon.

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Middle East News

Palestinians laud Soviet assistance

By Sana Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Palestinians expect a more prominent role for the Soviet Union in the Middle East peace talks after the reappointment of Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze and after receiving indications that the Soviets intend to take a more active role that could help the Palestinians during the negotiations, a Palestinian delegate said Saturday.

Ghassan Al Khatib also said that the American letter of invitation to the Palestinians expected "negotiations of substance" to take place "in two tracks — a Palestinian-Israeli track and a Jordanian-Israeli track" — to take place in the next round of bilateral talks with Israel.

Israel has so far rejected the Wednesday date set by the U.S. and insists that the Washington talks only deal with procedural issues. The Israeli government wants the negotiations of substance to take place in the Middle East, something the Arab sides reject and consider it an Israeli excuse to avoid progress in the peace process.

"The American invitation mentioned that they expect this round of talks to deal with substance and that there will be two-track negotiations, a Palestinian-Israeli track and a Jordanian-Israeli track," Mr. Khatib said.

The letter of invitation also mentioned "for each party to propose its views on the transitional phase."

The next round of bilateral talks have been expected to deal with the transfer of authority to the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as a transitional phase that would lead to Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories.

But Mr. Khatib said that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was trying to avoid negotiations of substance to please some members of his coalition government who oppose negotiations with the Palestinians on such issues as the transitional phase and Jewish settlements.

"But if he (Mr. Shamir) does not enter real negotiations, he will lose the Americans," Mr. Khatib predicted. "Sooner or later, he will have to answer to the U.S. on whether he will start negotiations on serious issues."

The Palestinian team has also prepared a comprehensive report, entitled "Since Madrid: Israeli Confidence-Destroying Measures." It details Israeli activities against the Palestinians in the occupied territories since the opening of the U.S.-Soviet sponsored peace conference opened in Madrid on Oct. 30.

Mr. Khatib said that the report documented the escalation of Jewish settlement activity and confiscation of Arab land in the occupied territories, Israel's arbitrary measures against the people, and "Israel's disinformation campaign."

The Israeli media campaign, he said, was attempting to disinform the Palestinian public of the activities and intentions of the negotiating team. "They refer to us as the alternative leadership, for example. But the people are aware."

Mr. Khatib added that while the Israeli government had not shown any signs of "good will" to try to solve the Palestinian-Israeli problem, the Palestinians under occupation have.

The peaceful demonstrations that took place in the occupied territories is very indicative of the fact that the peaceful and sincere position of the delegation is genuine and supported by the public," Mr. Khatib stressed.

Palestinians have demanded that as part of confidence-building measures, the Israelis should stop all settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, stop demolishing homes, and to release all Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

Mr. Khatib, a professor of economics at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, said that the U.S.'s refusal to ask for facilitating their travel was an effort to pressure the Palestinian team to establish direct contact with the Israeli authorities.

Israel wants the Arab participants in the peace talks to make direct contact with the Jewish state to arrange procedure and logistics dealing with the peace talks. But the Arabs insist that the contact should be made through the co-sponsors in order to avoid normalizing relations with Israel. The Palestinians reject direct contact with the Israeli government because they are still under their occupation.

"It is not possible to ask them

U.S. and Iran reach accord on assets dispute

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States, in a move that could improve ties with Tehran, said Friday it reached final agreement to compensate Iran with \$270 million for undelivered U.S.-made military equipment dating from before the country's 1979 revolution.

Spokesman Richard Boucher said final details were settled this week and the international tribunal at the Hague is expected to approve the agreement early next week.

The accord, under negotiation for 18 months, is an important step towards resolving financial differences between the two countries as the saga of Western hostages held by pro-Iranian extremists in Lebanon comes to a close.

Iran's assets in the United States were ordered frozen by Washington after radicals held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days in the U.S. embassy in Tehran.

They have been tied up for a decade because of legal wrangling and have been a source of continued bitterness in U.S.-Iranian relations.

The United States will pay \$278 million to settle a claim regarding Iranian military equipment that was in the United States for repair, testing or other purposes when our embassy in Tehran was seized in November 1979," Mr. Boucher told reporters.

The Hague tribunal previously upheld the U.S. refusal to return military property to Iran but ruled that Washington must compensate Tehran for its value.

The two sides agreed on the figure of \$278 million last February but details like how the payments would be made and where they would be sent were left until now to be worked out.

Mr. Boucher said that \$260 million would be paid by cheques to the government of Iran.

The remaining \$18 million would be deposited in a security account to bring the account's total up to \$300 million to cover future rewards for U.S. claims against Iran, he said.

Iran's agreement to put the payment into the security account removes the last obstacle," Mr. Boucher said.

The United States refused to give the full amount directly to Iran. Tehran initially objected to putting a portion of the money in an escrow account, but recently relented.

The agreement comes as the plight of Western hostages appears near an end.

Two hostages, American Thomas Sutherland and Anglican Church envoy Terry Waite, were released recently and the remaining captives are expected to be freed soon.

The U.S. administration, seeking to avoid any hint of a deal with Iran, has maintained that resolution of the Iranian assets dispute is unrelated to the plight of the hostages.

But the settlement of claims is one way both sides can reward each other for progress in the hostage negotiations.

U.S. officials attribute Iran's new willingness to settle the \$278 million claim with its need to appear to justify the hostage release.

Some very large government claims, including Iran's multibillion-dollar claims arising out of the foreign military sales programme, as well as about 130 large private claims, remain pending at the Hague tribunal.

It will be cold, cloudy and rainy at times and winds will be mostly fresh. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain, while winds will be southerly fresh and seas wavy.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 5 / 10

Aqaba 14 / 20

Al-Salt 10 / 15

Amman 10 / 15

Aqaba 14 / 20

Al-Salt 10 / 15

Amman 10 / 15

Aqaba 14 / 20

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National Aid Fund capital increased by JD 3 million

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) will have its total capital increased from JD 5 million to JD 8 million, registering nearly an increase of 80 per cent, according to allocations made for it in the 1992 fiscal budget.

An NAF official said that the increase reflects the new government's keenness in providing for the needy among Jordanian people, who are the main beneficiaries of NAF projects and direct financial assistance.

The increase reflects the government's concern over the growing numbers of needy Jordanians living in poverty, which has been on the increase lately following the economic crisis in the country which started around the mid 1980s.

He said that since 1986, when the NAF was established, a total of 18,934 needy families benefited from allocations for financial assistance totalling around JD

14.8 million.

The assistance included monthly salaries for the needy reaching about JD 40 a month and vocational and rehabilitation projects.

According to the official, another 800 families are to be added to the list of the needy.

The NAF plans to finance 500 rehabilitation projects benefiting the poor people, he added.

In the past 10 months the NAF has spent JD 4.5 million on monthly salaries and rehabilitation schemes, he noted.

The Ministry of Social Development last month published the results of a survey which revealed that at least 20,000 families in Jordan now live in abject poverty and could be classified as starving had it not been for the help reaching them through the NAF and charitable organisations.

The study confirmed an earlier survey conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UN-

ICEF) which found that no less than 33 per cent of Jordanians live under the poverty line. The survey pointed out that at least 20,000 families are not only very poor, but live on charity handouts and assistance from the NAF.

The NAF is striving to expand its services to needy people, especially to those in need of medical care, and has been providing hearing aids, wheelchairs and other equipment to those in need of such help, the official noted.

The official quoted a recent study conducted by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) which referred to the lack of proper coordination among government aid funds for the poor and said that these funds and concerned institutions caring for the poor face common problems. This lack of coordination, he said, has led to improper and insufficient attention that should be given to the questions of poverty and unemployment in the Kingdom.

3 companies awarded contracts to build roads worth JD 22.7 million

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Public Works and Housing Saturday concluded three agreements with two local companies and one foreign company for the construction of roads in the Kingdom at a total cost of JD 22.7 million.

Two companies, one Saudi and the other Jordanian, will build a stretch of road between Al Azraq and the Iraqi border in the northeast at JD 5.1 and JD 5.9 million respectively, in 540 days.

The stretch is part of the 240-kilometre Amman-Iraqi border highway, which is being built at a total cost of JD 26.1 million. The whole project, which has been divided into four parts, is being financed through a

Japanese loan and partly by the Jordanian treasury.

The other agreement was concluded with a local company, which will build a stretch of the Zara-Ghor Haditha road at the cost of JD 11.7 million in 740 days. The treasury will finance 15 per cent of the project while the Saudi Development Fund will provide 40 per cent and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development 45 per cent.

The stretch is part of the Mafraq-Swemeh Ghor Safi road which is 90 kilometres long.

Minister of Public Works and Housing Saeed Hayel Surour signed the agreements with the general managers of the three companies.

Survey finds 3,200 expatriate families to invest in Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 3,200 Jordanian expatriate families returning from the Gulf region have expressed interest in launching investment projects in the Kingdom totalling JD 300 million with the purpose of contributing to the national economy and creating new jobs for the expatriates, according to a study conducted by the National Centre for Educational Research and Development (NCERD).

The study was based on a survey conducted on 16,500 expatriate families, nearly 100,000 citizens, the study noted.

The results of the study were announced Saturday by Dr. Victor Billeh, the NCERD president, who said that the survey was conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning. The survey covered information related to the types of projects the expatriates wished to initiate, the manner in which the plans will be financed and the geographic distribution of the projects, Dr. Billeh said.

He said that the various ministries and concerned institutions will be informed of the detailed outcome of the survey to enable them to take appropriate measures.

The study found that 141 families wished to carry out investment projects of about JD 100,000 in value or more. The rest wanted to carry out schemes ranging in capital between JD 10,000 and JD 50,000.

According to Dr. Billeh, more than half of those asked to give their views said they wanted to invest in trade, agriculture or industry.

On World AIDS Day, U.N. calls for cooperation

AMMAN (J.T.) — As World AIDS Day is observed today, many countries throughout the world are taking time to assess the programmes they have in place to fight this deadly epidemic.

The United Nations, one of the leaders in combating the spread of the disease, has repeatedly called for member countries to highlight the importance of joint efforts in educating the public about AIDS.

On Saturday, William Draper, UNDP administrator, again emphasised the importance of cooperation in the campaign against the disease. Following are Mr. Draper's remarks:

"Each year, the United Nations system, governments, communities and individuals around the world unite to celebrate World AIDS Day. This year, World AIDS Day emphasises the theme of sharing the challenge, encouraging a commitment to the struggle against HIV everywhere. As the world enters the second decade of the epidemic, we must pause to take stock not only of its challenges but of the spirit of hope and the partnership with which people have responded

globally. "This epidemic has clearly shown that people can change even quite intimate sexual behaviour. In the face of devastation, families and communities respond with concern and compassion. They provide the basis of our hope that the epidemic can be overcome.

"We have come to recognise that the epidemic impacts all aspects of human, social and economic development. It is critical that the response of the United Nations system be comprehensive, interdisciplinary and collaborative.

"UNDP and WHO recognised this as early as 1988, when they drew up the WHO/UNDP alliance to combat HIV/AIDS. The alliance recognises WHO's global leadership in health policy and programmes and UNDP's expertise in social and economic development. UNDP is now the single largest contributor to the WHO global programme on AIDS.

"UNDP is an active member of the management committee of the WHO global programme on AIDS and a contributor to its programmes at the global and

country levels. We have a mandate to collaborate with all United Nations agencies and organisations whose expertise can contribute to minimizing the adverse effects of the epidemic and preventing its further spread. These include UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO and the World Bank. Also, members of the GPA management committee.

"The UNDP policy framework for its response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic places primary importance on supporting community initiatives and on responding in a gender-sensitive manner. The framework contains a set of guiding principles drawn from the global AIDS strategy. These underline all our work in this field including programme support and personnel policies and practices.

"UNDP recognises that it must build national capacity to respond to the epidemic not only in health ministries but also in ministries responsible for planning and finance, and in the productive and

social sectors, all of which are, or will be, involved as the epidemic spreads. Support in more than sixty provided to national HIV/AIDS programmes in more than sixty countries and this support is complemented through regional and interregional programmes.

"Affected communities throughout the world have developed programmes which respond to their own needs and concerns. Supporting families with infected members or families in which the productive adults have died. UNDP is committed to supporting these initiatives.

The role of community-based organisations is central to the development of effective programmes to prevent further infection and respond to the consequences of the epidemic. The work of communities has also been supported by non-governmental organisations who have developed prevention, support and care programmes.

"No one organisation, public or private, local or national, can cope solely through its own work.

This must be a collective effort.

UNDP is committed to sharing the challenge.

Jordanian dentists' delegation returns from conference

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian delegation comprising 140 dentists returned to Amman from Baghdad after taking part in a conference organised jointly by the Jordanian and the Iraqi dentists associations.

Besides Iraq and Jordan, delegations representing several Arab countries participated in the conference, which concluded its work recently.

President of the Jordanian Dentists Association Irfan Sultan, who led the association's delegation, said the three-day conference discussed several working papers dealing with various dental specialisations.

He said an exhibition of dental medicines and equipment was held on the sidelines of the conference. Several Jordanian and Iraqi medical companies took part in the exhibition, he added.

The conference, Dr. Sultan said, was held to enhance cooperation

between the two Arab peoples in Jordan and Iraq, "particularly at a time when the economic embargo imposed on the Iraqi people still prevails," he said.

It was also held to promote and bolster professional, social and scientific relations between dentists in Jordan, Iraq and other Arab countries, he added.

Dr. Sultan said the participants had the chance to be familiarised with the situation in Iraq and the effect of the Gulf war on the various scientific institutions.

According to Dr. Sultan, participants issued in the final session of the conference a statement in which they condemned the economic embargo on Iraq and called for ending it, particularly with regard to medical supplies and foodstuff. The embargo was imposed on Iraq by the U.N. Security Council following its occupation of Kuwait in August 1990.

BOOK EXHIBITION — A two-week exhibition of scientific and technical books organised by the Jordan Book Centre was opened at the University of Jordan Saturday by University President Fawzi Ghar-

ebel. The organisers said that

students will have a 20 to 60 per cent discount on books bought during the exhibition. The books and references are in Arabic and several foreign languages.

Welcome to Cyprus

The Director-General of Cyprus Tourism, Mrs. Phryne Michael, answering a question posed by a leading Arab journalist said: "I would like to assure our friends in the Arab World that for us tourism is not merely numbers. Our ambition is to offer to every tourist who comes to Cyprus all facilities so that he can enjoy his holidays to the maximum possible degree and thus leave our island a happier and more relaxed human being."

Today Cyprus is still a special place; despite its small size it offers a unique variety of scenery,

EC delegation, officials discuss ways of increasing cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein opened at the Royal Court Saturday a visiting team representing the Socialist group at the European Parliament led by Claude Cheysson and discussed Middle East developments and the peace process.

The team was briefed by the King on Jordan's stand with regard to the peace process.

Mr. Cheysson briefed the King on the European Community's (EC) role in the upcoming multilateral talks. Mr. Cheysson said that Europe wants to increase its cooperation with the countries of the Middle East region.

Later, Euro-Arab cooperation in economic and trade fields and the role of the EC were discussed at meetings by the EC team with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber.

The team discussed with the prime minister ways to promote scopes of cooperation between the Arabs and Europe in general and Jordan and the EC in particular.



Claude Cheysson, who is heading a European Parliament delegation on a visit to Jordan, Saturday discusses economic cooperation and the

peace process with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker (Petra photo)

would play active role in the upcoming multilateral talks in the peace process.

In a meeting with Finance Minister Basel Jarash, the EC team discussed Jordan's economic situation and the difficulties facing the Jordanian economy.

They also discussed measures to overcome the consequences of the Gulf crisis, Petra said.

At a meeting with Dr. Abu Jaber, Mr. Cheysson voiced the EC's appreciation of Jordan's active role in the Middle East, noting in particular that Jordan has been shouldering a major responsibility in dealing with the region's affairs.

Mr. Cheysson stressed the importance of continued EC-Arab cooperation in matters of mutual interest.

Dr. Abu Jaber exchanged with the EC Parliamentary team ideas about the peace process. He said that Jordan was attaching great importance to the EC role in promoting Euro-Arab relations and stressed the importance of enhancing mutual economic cooperation which can contribute to the establishment of a lasting peace in the region.

The foreign minister said Jordan was hoping that the EC

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Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

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New thresholds

IN RECENT press interviews and other statements, His Majesty King Hussein expressed hope and indicated progress towards an early meet in current inter-Arab relations and improved climate for better cooperation and coordination. In this context, Jordan is pinning real hopes on the restoration of fraternal relations with Saudi Arabia as a matter of priority. The first occasion for an Arab meeting on a high level is the Islamic conference scheduled to be convened in Dakar on Dec. 9.

These developments are not only most welcome but also most helpful to the ongoing peace process projected to enter its critical second stage in Washington on Dec. 4. What better boost to the Arab bargaining position in their quest for an equitable and durable peace in the region than to have the brotherly Arab relations restored to their traditional level? As a matter of fact the Islamic forum may indeed serve as a launching pad for expanded Arab relations with a view to reaching new heights. Injecting such positive elements in Arab relations would surely leave their impact on the present search for a just and permanent settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially the Palestinian dimension. Thus the Arab World is likely to be once again on the threshold of a new and bright era that will augur well for the Arabs everywhere and to their causes. Needless to say, the Arab World became so demoralised in the wake of the Gulf war and in the process lost much of its stature and power in the international arena. The beginning of the end of that dismal chapter in the contemporary Arab history stands to regain for the Arabs everywhere much of what they had lost in the last year.

The King's interview with the Middle East Broadcasting Corporation also made very interesting revelations with regard to the domestic scene in the Kingdom. After translating the principles enshrined in the National Charter into deeds and actions, the Monarch said, the stage will be set for new elections either on their prescribed date or on an earlier date if the circumstances warrant the holding of early national elections. His Majesty was emphatic in saying, however, that the people will be the final arbiters of such solemn decisions. Granted much time would be needed to translate the pact into reality but there is every reason to think in terms of holding the next parliamentary elections on its edifice as soon as its components acquire the status of law in the country. The formation of new political parties to serve as the foundation of pluralistic democracy would surely call for new elections. Everyone in Jordan, including present parliamentarians, concede that the 1989 elections were lacking in more sense than one. Suffice to recall that there were no political parties on the basis of which the electorates could have made intelligent choices and cast their ballots accordingly.

As today marks the opening of the third session of Parliament with the King delivering the speech from the Throne outlining the future course of the country on the domestic as well as the external fronts, the eyes of all Jordanians will be focused on the speech to discern any new signals on the home front. Most of all the attention will be directed to how the government will envisage putting the National Charter into practice and the time framework that will govern this endeavour. Much time has already been lost in this regard and most probably Parliament will be called upon to act expeditiously for this purpose.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily said Saturday that the speech from the Throne, which will be delivered Sunday to Parliament upon the start of its new session, is expected to be based on the King's letter to the government upon its formation. The speech from the Throne is also expected to reaffirm the basic principles contained in the letter which urged the new government to initiate a new era of fruitful cooperation with the legislative authority in order to deal with the chronic problems in the country, the paper said. It said that the Jordanians look with hope towards such fruitful cooperation because it will no doubt benefit them and the country's economy of the present and the future. The Jordanians stand behind their leadership and are hopeful that cooperation between the executive and legislative authorities will be practised in word and deed. The Cabinet members and the members of Parliament are personalities chosen for their task because they are capable of shouldering their responsibility and are determined to continue the process of democratisation in all its aspects, the paper said. It said that the Jordanian citizens hope that the excesses on the part of either party, which marred the democratic process, would not be repeated and that the two authorities' attention would be focused on matters designed to safeguard national interests.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily called on Arab countries now negotiating with Israel to enlist their assistance of experts like Dr. Farouk Al Baz, the director of the U.S. space centre in Boston. Salah Abdal Samad said that Dr. Al Baz would be of vital benefit for the Arabs in their discussion about the water resources of their region since he is an expert on remote sensing techniques employed for the discovery of natural resources and underground water. The writer noted with delight the ideas Dr. Al Baz imparted to the students of the Baccalaureate School in Amman two days ago, and said Jordanian universities would do well to invite this scientist to deliver lectures for the benefit of the students and the nation at large. The writer said Israel has its scientists helping its leaders in their upcoming negotiations with the Arabs over the water resources and their distribution under a peace agreement. It is time, he said, that the Arabs enlist their own scientists and experts to help them achieve advantages in the coming Arab-Israeli talks and assist in the economic development of the Arab World.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Why an economic adjustment programme

OBJECTIONS to the economic adjustment programme sponsored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are many. Those who object loudly or dismiss the programme out of hand stand to gain politically in the street simply by showing themselves as anti-IMF, and anti-World Bank. But these objections do not serve the best interest of the country, if this interest is of real concern to those who object.

It is claimed that the adjustment programme represents an unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country. This is not true. The IMF does not, and cannot, impose its services or volunteer to help. The IMF staff do not come to a country until they receive an urgent invitation and call to assist.

The IMF, by the way, is an off-shoot of the United Nations. It was established after World War II to operate as the central bank of the central banks of the world. One hundred fifty two countries contributed its paid-up capital including Jordan.

The economic adjustment programmes are officially issued by the states concerned. The IMF would evaluate the programme and approve it or disapprove it. The state concerned can of course call on the experts of the IMF, mostly Indians and Pakistanis, to assist in the preparation of the programme to save time and to know which targets are acceptable and which are not acceptable

to the management of the IMF. Strictly speaking, the programme has to be decided by the concerned government. The IMF has no authority whatsoever to impose any decision that is not acceptable to the government. If the IMF were angered, it would withhold its own credit to the country concerned and refrain from asking the Paris and London clubs to help with debt rescheduling and relief.

It is also claimed that the IMF makes the decisions on behalf of the government, and that it is the IMF that decides for instance to raise the prices, reduce subsidies, impose a certain tax and the like. This is not true. The IMF may correctly observe that there is a huge deficit in the central government's budget, which is neither good nor sustainable. It recommends that the deficit should be reduced by a certain amount or percentage every year. In this respect the IMF does not interfere in the government decisions to achieve this agreed objective. The government remains free to choose the best ways and means, either by increasing revenues, or reducing expenditure, or a mixture of both. For example if the agreed target was the reduction of the budget deficit in a certain year by say JD 80 million, it will be left to the government to make it by imposing or increasingly consumption tax, reducing subsidies, increasing the proceeds of income tax, raising the prices of water, electricity, fuel oil, or by any combination of the above.

Of course, it is natural and legitimate to criticise any economic programme. In economic, fiscal, and monetary policies there is no absolute right or wrong. The economic decision is a balancing or a trade-off between benefits and costs. But this does not mean that we can ask our university professors to make the programme for us. The approval of the programme by the University of Jordan or any local economist and their certification that the programme is, to the best of their knowledge, adequate and serious and is being adhered to, are not acceptable in Paris Club or London Club. Without the fund's official approval and pressure, the lenders — governments, banks and otherwise — will insist on their contractual rights and will not agree to rescheduling their debts or reduce their interest rate or grant any relief, which is the crux of the matter.

Jordan needs an economic adjustment programme, approved by the IMF, because its national economy badly needs adjustment and because it needs the cooperation of the creditors in order to overcome its financial troubles. The programme is convincing scientifically and does not represent intervention in the economic policies and decisions which remain the sole responsibility of the government, who can suspend the programme at any time if it finds a better alternative course of action.

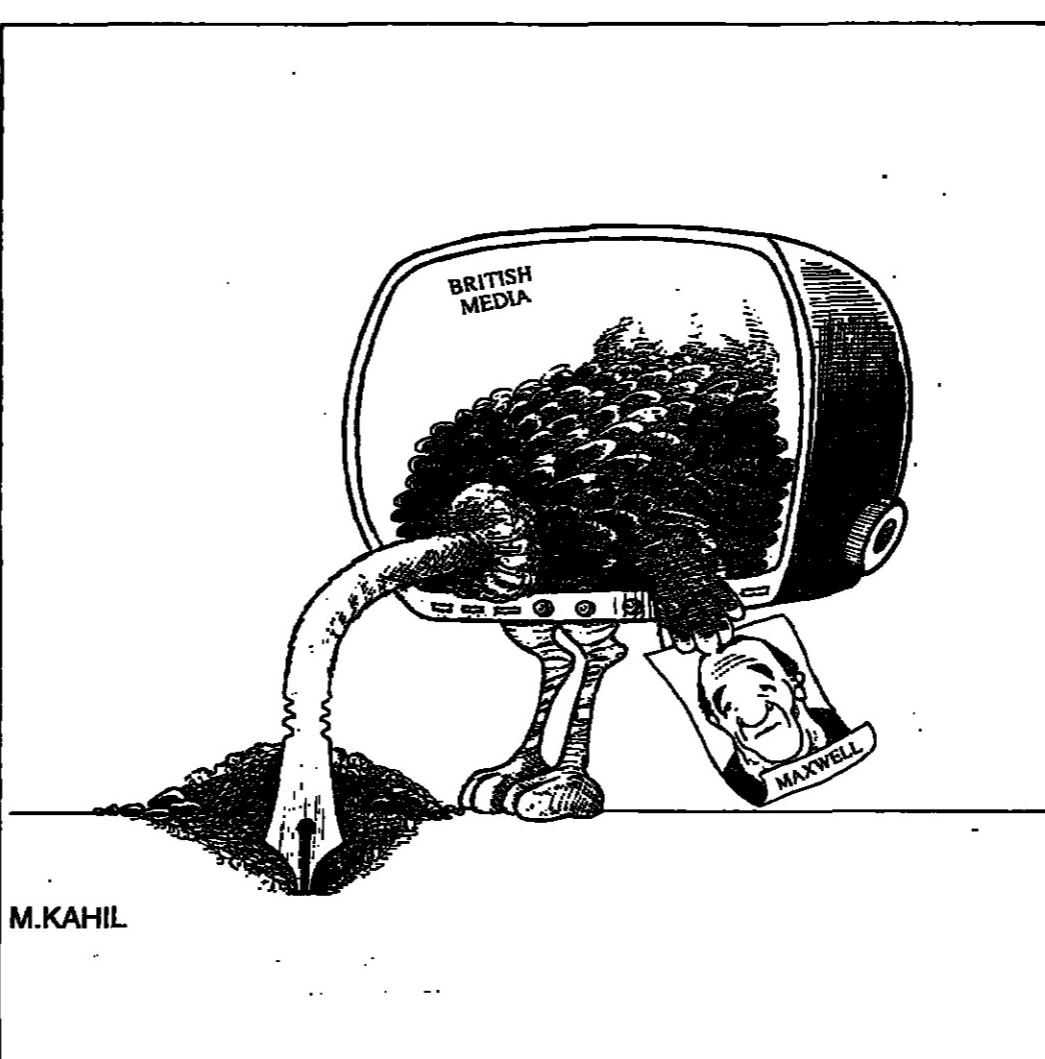
Israel, media tycoons and the conspiracy theory

By Mohammad I. Ayish

WHEN American investigative reporter Seymour Hersh published his book, "The Samson Option" (Random House, 1991), Israeli nuclear secrets were not the only gripping revelations. Mr. Hersh's exposé of close links between the late media mogul Robert Maxwell and the Israeli prime minister's office and the secret service, Mossad, was equally astounding. Mr. Maxwell, who died Nov. 5, 1991 after his body was found floating nude off the Canary Islands, had headed a \$2 billion publishing empire of which London's "Daily Mirror" and the "New York Daily News" are two outstanding publications. The media magnate, who was buried in Jerusalem, also had a majority share in Israel's "Maariv" newspaper and a \$300 million investment in the Jewish state.

Although Mr. Maxwell's death is still shrouded in mystery, his reported liaisons with the Israelis seem to underscore Israel's deep penetration of a good number of media institutions which enjoy profound influence on public opinion and intellectual discourse in the West in general and in the United States in particular. For journalism academics and professionals, the disclosure of Mr. Maxwell's Israeli connections should offer an opportunity for considering many of our hypothetical assumptions regarding the forces that seem to bear on Western media reporting and portrayal of the Middle East. This issue has been debated in scores of academic and professional meetings, research works and media commentaries. Yet, there seems to be no consensus on defining the mechanisms through which those forces impinge on media editorial and programming decisions. While some have cited professional, cultural and psychological reasons for the mostly lopsided Arab images and favourable Israeli portrayals, others have blamed the Arabs for their poor performance in European and American arenas.

The least popular school of thought on the issue has been associated with the conspiracy



theory. Proponents of this viewpoint, though very few, assume deliberate media attempts to distort Arab images and polish Israeli ones in fulfillment of pre-planned schemes of actions. In blunt terms, negative Arab and positive Israeli coverage appears systematically in some European and American media simply because they were politically and emotionally supportive of Israeli policies and actions. This brings us to conclude that purposeful media involvement in promoting Israeli interests does amount to what is called in social sciences "realpolitik." Such media playing of power politics is

often dismissed by mainstream academics and journalists in the West as contravening the basic tenets of journalism as an independent and objective "Fourth Estate." It has been argued that media operating in a democratic setting usually share an adversarial rather than a collaborative relationship with government(s).

Conspiracy thinking does not enjoy widespread appeal among social science scholars and journalism practitioners simply because it seems to defy the basic logic of scientific investigations which draw on first-hand observations of reality. Data on the intricate relationships between some Western media, on the one hand, and Israel and its

apologists on the other hand, are not always within the reach of researchers and investigative reporters. And it would take a once-in-a-time leakage by a disgruntled informer to make the revelation.

When Alfred Lilienthal, the American Jewish scholar mostly known for his anti-zionist convictions, published his book "The Zionist Connection" some 15 years ago, reaction among academic and professional communities was characterised by low enthusiasm and perhaps sheer apathy. It was argued that the book thrives on conspiratorial premises of analysis, and seems to ignore the processes through which political and sentimental

tendencies of media staff trickle down to communication messages which appear in the form of broadcast programmes and print content. Similar works by such towering intellectual figures like Naomi Chomsky and Edward Said and by former U.S. Senate Paul Findley have been given lip service among Western academics and professional journalists in the West, something that stood in sharp contrast with the extensive fanfare these works received in the Arab World.

Obsessed with building theories in relationships among phenomena sharing certain denominators, we in the scholarly community have exhibited an unnecessarily extraordinary sensitivity and loathe to even raising the question of conspiracy in media analysis. Alternative methods of investigating external influences (commercial interests, political groups, national and foreign governments... etc) have been approached within what social scientists call "media sociology," the study of how different factors impinge on media content and cause it to appear as it does. The farthest frontier reached by researchers trained in the tradition of quantitative investigations, was to probe into correlations rather than causal relationships between hypothesised influences and patterns of media content. When those correlations happened to be highly positive, we tend to affirm the notion that even such highly-positive correlations should in no way imply that presumed influences have direct bearing on media output.

The writer of this article in no way condones conspiratorial thinking when addressing Western media reporting of the Middle East. The overwhelming majority of Western journalists are to be commended for their firm commitment to the highest standards of the profession. Such commitment was nowhere more manifest than in the reporting of the three-day Madrid Mideast peace conference. Yet, the Israeli penetration of Western media institutions, as suggested by the Maxwell case, cannot be overlooked. While mere Jewish ownership

Mohammad I. Ayish is an associate professor at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Yarmouk University.

In alien custody — an exile's return to Palestine

By Ghada Karmi

An underclass

I HAVE returned from a personal journey to the land of my birth, Palestine. In the 43 years since my family's flight from war-torn Jerusalem in 1948, I had never returned. Going there after four decades on psychological avoidance was therefore both a challenge and a threat. Many "diaspora" Palestinians like myself dread to see the homeland they once knew in alien custody, and stay away, preferring to keep their memories unsullied. As it turned out, my visit was further overshadowed by apprehensions and ambivalence about Palestinian participation in the Middle East peace conference in Madrid. It is undeniable that, despite the painful evidence of history and experience, for many Palestinians the Madrid conference seemed to hold out a magical hope of an end to the conflict.

But, for me, travelling round Israel, there was a tragic — almost obscene — dissonance between the illusory expectations raised by the conference and the grim reality of the situation for Palestinians under Israeli rule. What I saw during my visit was so disturbing that it makes the speculation about the achievement and outcome of the Madrid conference seem irrelevant. Of course, I was not ignorant of the situation in Israel before I went — few Palestinians in exile are. But I was unprepared for the concrete reality of Israel's takeover of what had been an Arab land only 43 years ago.

Later, in a Palestinian res-

taurant in Jaffa, I experienced a much more accentuated form of this reaction. There, the waiter avoided speaking Arabic altogether and preferred to deal with my Israeli companions instead, whom he treated with the deference of a servant towards his masters. I was painfully aware that Palestinians in Israel have become an underclass, mainly confined to menial jobs and caught in an intricate web of racist practices and attitudes which the majority of Israelis accept uncritically as a natural part of everyday life. Those Israelis I mentioned this to were genuinely distressed and insulted by the imputation of racism.

The most immediate impression, however, was of the physical changes to the landscape. The approach to Jerusalem was particularly instructive. In my memory, the hills around it used to be beautiful, sandy green sentinels shadowing the city itself. But now each hilltop is covered with unsightly settlements; crowded mass housing which crawls down the hillsides like a concrete fungal growth. Indeed, all settlements in Israel and in the occupied territories are built on the tops of hills, as if to proclaim in stone their intention to dominate. Upper Nazareth started as a settlement built on the hills above the Arab town. With generous support from the government (Israeli municipalities receive two thirds more funding than do Arab ones), it expanded rapidly and its sprawling mass now threatens to literally choke the town below.

Annexation gathers pace

Jewish settlements are going up virtually overnight in the occupied territories and are being integrated into a masterplan designed to control the whole region. North of Jerusalem, for example, a grid-shaped network of roads is being carved out of Palestinian land to connect the settlements to each other and to Jerusalem. The grid network will fragment and isolate Palestinian villages and farms, and thereby supplement the effects of land dispossession. To date, 63 per cent of land in the occupied West Bank and 40 per cent in Gaza have been appropriated by Israel. Even more seriously, 80 per cent of West Bank water has been diverted for Israeli use. As the talks about peace take their leisurely course, the annexation — no longer creeping — of Palestinian land and resources proceeds apace. The effect of that on people's lives is devastating.

When I visited what is left of my family in the West Bank town of Tulkarm, I found them waging a daily and unequal struggle against the Israeli occupation which may soon overwhelm them. A combination of heavy taxation and loss of land, as well as army brutality — while I was there, some dozen unarmed youths were set upon by soldiers and beaten senseless — may soon drive them and others like them away. And this is of course Israel's not-so-hidden agenda: to make life so intolerable for Palestinians that they will "trans-

fate as mine.

A country only for Jews

The overwhelming message that I and every visitor to Israel was eventually made crystal-clear to me: this is a country only for Jews. There is no room for anyone else. Every day, this message is being translated into reality, by settlement building, by land expropriation and by the deprivation of rights aimed to make Palestinian lives there intolerable.

How, then, is one to reconcile the grim reality of this situation with the ardent manoeuvrings of the current U.S.-sponsored peace process? Without an immediate halt to Israel's colonisation of the occupied territories and a complete end to its military occupation, any Palestinian settlement the peace process achieves will be meaningless. And in the long term, the issue of Israel's racism towards the Arabs both inside and outside its borders will have to be addressed. So long as Israel maintains its insistence on the exclusive claim of world Jewry to Arab land and resources, it will continue to be an uncomfortable and potentially dangerous neighbour, even within agreed borders. And yet, on all these crucial issues, the U.S. is resoundingly silent.

Dr. Karmi is a Research Associate at the Centre for Near and Middle Eastern Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

Information campaign needed to stem AIDS spread

By Waleed Saad

ON the occasion of World AIDS Day that falls today, the Jordanian Ministry of Health revealed, a few days ago, that the total number of AIDS cases in the country has risen to 66, of which 59 are Jordanians.

On the surface, these statistics may suggest that the spread of the HIV virus in the Kingdom is not yet serious enough to call for concern and worry. Some Jordanians may also read into such figures as a sign to relax their vigilance against further spread of the disease. Even concerned governmental authorities treat the

highly infectious disease as so much under control that it needs little more attention than what is already being done to protect the people from it. Yet, in view of the fact that the AIDS virus is still spreading worldwide, with about 9 million men, women and children already infected by it and their lives and the lives of their loved ones devastated by it, it would be indeed more prudent not to lower the country's guards even though the problem appears checked for the time being.

Being a touristic country with anticipated rise in tourism — especially if there will be a settlement of the Arab-Israeli

conflicts — there is every reason to believe that the AIDS crisis will be compounded in the coming years. Besides, Jordanian tourism to foreign and exotic lands is also on the rise and that may also mean more and more possible contacts with the disease.

If these two projections are taken in conjunction with the fact that the treatment of the disease is still nowhere in sight, one should conclude that the stage is set for the proliferation of the cases of AIDS in this country as well.

True, the Ministry of Health appears to be on top of things for the time being and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the National Committee to Combat AIDS is taking several precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus. Nevertheless, there is a great deal more that needs to be done. To begin with, the dissemination of information about the health problem is still low-key and ineffectual. Many Jordanians have only heard that there is an ongoing wide-scale campaign to educate the public about the issue. And this claim comes in stark contrast with the fact that neither Jordan Television nor Jordanian dailies have heeded the most recent medical revelations about the role of dentists and their equipment in the proliferation of the HIV virus.

Jordanians have a right to know if their dentists are disinfecting their equipment after each patient. The same goes to other medical branches operating in the country. Meanwhile, the public has a human right to know all that is to know about the disease in order to serve as a watchdog over their physicians and dentists and at the same time protect themselves from the horrific disease.

"They (the haves) are the ones on the spending spree. They are the ones who can afford it," a businessman in his early 30s said. "They are the ones who must be stopped."

A strong egalitarian streak runs deep within the Korean character. Coupled with a perception that the country's new wealth has not been equally shared it has fuelled popular support for the current campaigns.

Maybe it is our traditional mores that keep our mass media from granting full exposure of the problem. If this is the case, then it is high time

to educate the public about the issue.

"Madrid was like an injection for us after the Gulf war," Arafat said. "We are watching closely to ensure that U.S. exports are not severely affected. The current frugality campaign is merely last year's anti-import drive recycled.

On a recent visit to Seoul, U.S. trade representative Carla Hills warned Korea in a speech: "We are watching closely to ensure that U.S. exports are not severely affected. The current frugality campaign is merely last year's anti-import drive recycled.

Many South Koreans feel that their country's economic gains will be at risk if the current campaign does not succeed.

"Now is the crucial moment for the nation to choose between another take-off to join the advanced countries and falling back to the status of an underdeveloped nation," the Korea Times said.

Minister of Trade and Industries Lee Bong-Suh said if the nation was to join advanced countries, then it must renew its traditional work ethic, or fall back to the underdeveloped category.

In a recent nationwide survey, 84.2 per cent of South Koreans said they believed the economy was in serious trouble.

"The government has to do something about the economy now. If not then we're really in trouble with no way out," the president of a construction company said.

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South Korean employee is now urged to work 30 minutes more a day and save 10 per cent of his or her income.

South Koreans toiled 51.1 hours a week in 1988 and 46.3 in the first quarter of 1991, compared with a 40-hour week in the United States and a legal work week of 46 hours in Japan.

This month, about 500 business and labour representatives staged a rally to inaugurate a "five more" campaign.

Organised by South Korea's five major business associations, it called on South Koreans to be more hard working, more thrifty, kind save, produce and export more.

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Sports

Leconte is almost a stranger on court

France (R) — Henri Leconte has spent almost as much in hospital clinics and operations in recent years as in tennis court.

But he gave France a vision of a first Davis Cup title in almost 10 years with a stunning 6-4 7-5 6-4 triumph over world number six Pete Sampras.

Leconte's previous official victory was more than five months ago at Wimblodor where he beat Jaime Yzaga of Peru in the second round before injuring his back in the next match with Davis Cup team-mate Guy Forget.

The third back operation of his career followed, Leconte stumped to 161st in the world rankings and most observers thought the career of the flamboyant Frenchman, once the world number five, was over.

But one man never lost faith in Leconte. His old Davis Cup captain, the now Yannick Noah, now France's non-playing captain, asked him two months ago to prepare himself for the final.

"He had a long way to come back but his motivation was so great, I knew he would do it," Noah said.

"Today he played a great match, the match I dreamed he would play. Now I'm still dreaming and it's about France winning the Davis Cup."

An emotional Leconte described it as the greatest day of his life and the best match of his career.

"It was the perfect match," he said. "I can't remember playing so well right through a whole match."

"This gives me a lot of confidence. Now my aim is to get back in the top 20 if I don't get any more physical problems."

Leconte, 28, enjoyed the fanatical support of 8,000 noisy French fans at the Palais Des Sports, a vastly different crowd to the one which jeered him at the French Open in Paris three years ago when he lost the final in straight sets to Swede Mats Wilander.

"That's all forgotten now," he said. "There's a lot of difference between a Grand Slam final and a Davis Cup final."

Sampras, making his Davis Cup debut, was simply overwhelmed by the experience.

"I certainly didn't underestimate him," the world number six said. "He has a lot of Davis Cup experience and this was my first match."

"I knew Henri is always a very dangerous player and he was pretty hot today. I think he played as well as could."

"I wasn't up to it but I just wasn't playing well. All credit to him but maybe I helped him play that well."

Sampras, winner of this month's ATP Tour World Championship, said he had been bothered by having to wait till the crowd quietened down before he could serve. "I like to play my game pretty quickly," he added.

Noah said the French team knew that and had encouraged the crowd to chant to slow Sam-



Henri Leconte

pris down and upset his rhythm.

Leconte now has the chance to become the French hero of the moment. Noah nominated him to play the doubles alongside

Perkins leads Australian swimmers to 4 wins

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota (R) — The Australian contingent made their presence felt at the U.S. Open Swimming Championships by winning four of 10 finals Friday, opening night of the three-day meeting.

Kieren Perkins, the 800

metre freestyle world record holder, led an Australian sweep of the top three places in the 400 metre freestyle in a meeting record time of three minutes 50.04 seconds.

Ian Brown was second in

3:51.11 and Glen Housman came in third in a time of

3:52.71.

But Australia's top prospect in four women's events, Heyley Lewis, the world 200

metre freestyle champion, was forced to miss the 400 meter

freestyle and may be out for

the rest of the meeting due to a

recent accident.

Lewis suffered a punctured

ear drum during a practice session Wednesday when another swimmer kicked her in the ear

and will only compete if a

doctor gives her the go ahead.

Lewis' coach, Joe King said

a local ear specialist said the

injury was not serious.

"He said she could swim if

the ear was properly packed so

that no water could get in,"

King said. "In my 36 years of

coaching, I've never seen such

a freakish thing. It's a billion

to one shot that this would happen."

Australian Darren Lange led from the start to win the men's 50 metre freestyle in 22.78 ahead of countryman Angus Waddell in 22.87.

American Olympic champion Matt Biolini finished tied for last in 23.38 but was not particularly disappointed.

"It was not good and not bad, just run of the mill," Biolini said. "I didn't come in expecting to win."

American Angel Martino, who was removed from the 1988 Olympic Squad ahead of the Seoul Games after testing positive for a banned substance, set a meeting record in the women's 50 metre freestyle in a time of 25.69 seconds.

Other victories for the strong Australian contingent came from Samantha Riley in the women's 100 metre breaststroke and Jacqueline McKenzie, who won the 200 metre individual medley in 2:17.69.

McKenzie, daughter of 1968 Olympic 100 metre butterfly champion Lyn McClements, was well ahead at the halfway mark and easily beat France's Celine Bonnet, who clocked 2:19.12.

JORDAN TIMES, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1991

HOROSCOPE

JORDAN TIMES, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

Working overtime at present may hold you back from communicating with persons who have it within their power to aid you in what means most to you. Use that brain-power to stay on course.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19)

Take some time out to let those who see you are the one who does value and appreciate those confidants and advisors whose suggestions mean so much to you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20)

This is the time for you to be sure to get into those special talents with which you are endowed and to make them operate so you thoroughly enjoy them.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21)

There are some interesting and ingenious means by which you are now able to convince your family to do something that means a great deal to you.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 20)

Take time out to find out just what your usual allies have in mind for your mutual progress and then you will be able to carry through so they approve.

AQUARIUS (January 21 to February 19)

Whenever anyone wishes of you can be handled and attended to with practical and good common sense so put your mind on gaining this world's goods.

PISCES (February 20 to March 20)

There are some highly effective means by which you can gain the good will of your personal contacts by being with them at outlets you both enjoy.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"I just bought a self-help book. Actually, my wife helped me."

JUMBLE

THAT SCRABLED WORD GAME

by Herb Arnold and Bob Lee

RYMEE

Mexican president earns less than \$2,000 a month

MEXICO CITY (R) — The most powerful man in Mexico, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, can hardly consider himself among the best paid.

The Mexico City daily *La Jornada* says his net pay was the equivalent of less than \$2,000 a month in 1991, although his salary was up 11.4 per cent from the previous year.

Mr. Salinas' gross income was about \$3,850 a month, according to a budget ministry document cited by *La Jornada*, but half was swallowed up by taxes. His actual take-home pay was \$1,912 a month.

A senior public servant said he was unable to confirm the newspaper report but stressed that government officials earn far more through fringe benefits and "special allocations."

U.S. central bank approves major mergers

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) gave its approval Friday to two major bank mergers that would create the third-and-fourth-largest banking powerhouses in the United States.

The Fed approved a proposed merger between New York's Chemical Banking Corp. and Manufacturers Hanover Corp., which together would make up the third-largest bank with \$135 billion in assets.

The central bank also said it would allow NCNB Corp. to merge with C.S. Sovran Corp. in a marriage of two big southern institutions that would create the nation's no. 4 bank.

NCNB and C.S. Sovran would have total assets of \$116 billion. A pending merger between Bank of America and Security Pacific Corp., which the Fed has

not ruled on, would create the nation's second-biggest bank after Citicorp.

The Fed's approval appeared to be the last major obstacle for the proposed merger between Chemical and Manufacturers Hanover.

The central bank said the U.S. justice department had already reviewed the merger "and concluded that ... the transaction would not have a significantly adverse effect on competition."

The two mergers, first announced in July, illustrate the heavy pressure on big banks to search for partners in a bid to combat overall weakness and stiff competition in the industry, analysts said.

Both deals will result in thousands of layoffs as the banks move to contain costs and streamline operations.

Free trade brings five fold rise in Yemeni fish prices

ADEN, Yemen (R) — Free trade and a market economy are costing consumers dear in Aden, once the capital of the Arab World's only Marxist state.

The price of fish, an important source of protein in the port city of 500,000, has jumped about fivefold since the two Yemens merged in May 1990 and Marxism was abandoned.

Local traders blame unlicensed merchants they say are exporting the fish by air to neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

The people of Aden have asked the mayor, Mahmoud Arrasi, to intervene to stop exports and bring prices down.

Throughout 18 years of Marxism the state controlled the fish market and prices never rose above 750 fils (\$1.5) a kilogramme.

Now the fish are sold by auc-

tion and one kilogramme can fetch three to four dinars (\$6 to \$8).

The weekly newspaper Al Ayyam quoted fish merchants as saying "unlicenced people come to the auction and, in an unprecedented way, bid higher prices for any quantity offered."

The merchants at first said they were taking the fish to northern cities but, reminded that prices there were lower, they admitted the fish were exported to Saudi Arabia, it added.

Traders say a Saudi merchant in the Eastern Province of Hadhramaut has bought up the catch of all fishermen working for the province's cooperative society.

Under a deal with the cooperative, the merchant has given it a \$600,000 loan to buy new fishing boats, they added.

'Beg or work' says Zambian president

LUSAKA (R) — Zambia's new president Fredrick Chiluba, opening the first parliament under multi-party rule in two decades, said Friday the country's economy was in ruins.

"We are in a very grave situation. In the limited time available we have at last managed to shine a torch in the cupboard of state. Regrettably, I must inform you that the cupboard is bare. Even the crumbs are few," he told the house. "Our economy is in ruins and even the ruins are in danger."

Mr. Chiluba's government took office on Nov. 1 after veteran president Kenneth Kaunda was defeated in a general election.

Mr. Kaunda's opponents have accused him of ruining Zambia's economy, once healthy from copper exports and agriculture, through mismanagement and government corruption during his 27 years of rule since independence from Britain in 1964.

Under Mr. Kaunda's one-party rule introduced in 1973, the government controlled over 80 per cent of the economy and effectively blocked both foreign and local investment.

Now, Mr. Chiluba said, per capita debt was close to \$1,000 and inflation was over 100 per cent.

Mr. Chiluba, former head of the Zambian Confederation of

Trade Unions, said his government was "committed to a pragmatic reconstruction programme" to create jobs and generate income.

"A way has to be found to earn foreign exchange and reduce debt, or we risk forever being banished to the dark dungeons of international disrepute and perpetual internal decline," he said. "Zambians have two choices. We may beg, or we may work."

He said the donor community had a role in helping the country's economy to pick up but pleaded with them not to be too harsh with Zambia.

"Do not kill the patient with an overdose now. A little at a time may be more beneficial," he said.

He said his government's economic programme would seek to promote the private sector, target incentives for export promotion and local and foreign investment and remove barriers to foreign trade and investment.

An agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank was imminent, he said. Teams from both institutions are in the country to work on an economic programme.

Mr. Chiluba said the agricultural sector would receive special attention to include an overhaul of the marketing system.

"The former agricultural policy was incompetent bordering on the insane," he said.

Parliament approves German budget for 1992

BONN (R) — Germany's lower house of parliament Friday passed the government's 1992 budget draft, which foresees spending of 422.1 billion marks (\$262 billion) and a deficit of 45.3 billion marks (\$28.1 billion).

Roughly one-quarter of total spending, or 110 billion marks (\$68 billion), will go to help what used to be communists East Germans adapt to a market economy.

The 1991 budget foresees spending of around 410 billion marks (\$254.1 billion) and a federal deficit of around 66 billion marks (\$40.9 billion). High-tariff tax revenues will push the deficit sharply lower in 1992.

The budget includes spending of 91.3 billion marks (\$56.5 billion) by the labour ministry,

which is struggling to finance benefits for mounting numbers of unemployed workers in East Germany.

The ministry budget is up three billion marks (\$1.9 billion) from 1991.

The country's 1992 defence budget is being cut by 400 million marks (\$247.9 million) to \$2.1 billion marks (\$32.3 billion), while the transport ministry budget totals 40 billion marks (\$24.8 billion).

The economics ministry budget, which includes many investment subsidies for East Germany, will rise by one billion marks (\$620 million) to 15.4 billion marks (\$9.5 billion) in 1992.

Parliament's budget committee had recently increased the ministry budget by 770 million marks (\$477 million).

It reinstated subsidies for the shipbuilding and coal mining industry that had been struck out of the original budget draft. It also increased economic subsidy programmes for eastern Germany.

The budget also includes a 1.5 billion mark (\$930 million) rise in the farm ministry budget to 14 billion marks (\$8.7 billion).

The budget does not include an expected deficit of 30 billion marks, (\$18.6 billion) from the Treuhand agency privatising East German industry.

The budget only includes 280 million marks (\$17.5 million) in spending earmarked for moving Germany's government to Berlin.

President Fernando Collor de Mello's government, which swept to power promising to clean up government and stem abuses, has been engulfed by an avalanche of press and opposition denunciations of corruption.

"There are so many cases of corruption in Brazil today," said Paolo Ponte, archbishop of Sao Luis de Maranhao in Brazil's struggling north-east. "We want to make a special point of emphasising that the current crisis has a special nature. It is not just political or economic. It is ethical."

A typical example of the corruption allegations was aired Thursday night by the normally pro-government Globo Television channel.

Globo said congressman Alberto Goldman had asked the federal accounts tribunal to look into why the health ministry had agreed to pay 18.1 billion cruzados (about \$21 million) to a now-existent company to supervise another company which was supervising a government school building programme.

Soviet crisis deepens as budget funds dry up

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union plunged deeper into economic crisis Friday as its central banker announced that the country's budget funds had dried up.

Viktor Geraschenko, chairman of the state bank Gosbank which channels money to the central budget, said cash for this purpose had run out and no more transfers could be made without a decision from parliament.

"In this connection, we were forced this morning to stop such payments," he told state television.

The crisis throws into jeopardy the livelihood of millions of Soviet teachers, soldiers, doctors police and parliamentarians, all of whom are paid from the central budget.

Mr. Geraschenko said Gosbank took the decision to halt payments Thursday evening, a few hours after the Soviet parliament, which has authority to approve the transfer of budget funds from Gosbank, to meet Monday, a day earlier than scheduled, to resolve the crisis.

He accused deputies of "political manoeuvring" in blocking the credit Thursday, saying deputies from the Russian Federation were particularly to blame.

"It's possible to speak of the torpedoing of this important question," he said.

The wrangle is linked to a bitter economic struggle between Russia and its fellow republics as the old-style Soviet Union breaks up in the wake of last August's failed

inflation.

For the two weeks since then were some eight to 10 billion roubles (\$14.0 to 17.5 billion).

On the other hand, he said, some income was still flowing into the union budget, albeit with major irregularities. He gave no further figures.

Many of the rebellious Soviet

republics, including Russia, are heavily in arrears on budget payments.

Mr. Geraschenko said he understood republican leaders would meet Sunday to discuss the "sad situation" with the budget.

Meanwhile, Russian central bank chairman Georgi Matjukhin said Friday that the Russian republic was on the brink of hyperinflation.

"Inflation is high, very close to the standards of... hyperinflation," he told a financial conference in the Netherlands.

Russian plans to liberalise prices this winter will force "very sharp and very rapid" price rises.

Mr. Matjukhin said.

Hyperinflation is rapidly rising and self-fueling inflation that can cause economic collapse.

Mr. Matjukhin said some economists define it as an inflation rate of more than 50 per cent a month.

"Fortunately I suppose that our rate is a little bit lower," he said, but precise figures were not available.

Economists have speculated that inflation in the Soviet Union may be running at 200 per cent a year and that prices of basic goods could rise in Russia by up to four-fold once freed.

Mr. Matjukhin warned that any Soviet republic introducing its own currency without consulting others first would face serious consequences. Ukraine has threatened to launch its own money.

"If it is done suddenly and unilaterally without consultations, then we shall have to react strongly. I mean that we will be obliged to stop any payments between the republic and Russia," he said, without elaborating.

Russia wants to create a banking union with other republics based on the use of a common currency.

Church denounces rising tide of corruption in Brazil

BRASILIA, Brazil (R) — Brazil's influential Roman Catholic church issued a scathing attack Friday on what it described as growing corruption and denounced the "scandalously high salaries" of officials and businessmen.

In a declaration on the state of the nation, the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops lamented growing poverty, hunger, unemployment and misery among the country's 150 million people but added:

"This situation is aggravated by corruption, which is stretching out further and further, destroying society's sense of the common good. The customary complicity and impunity favour the corrupt and stimulate violence in the city and in the countryside."

Asked what evidence the church had for this statement, the Statistics Department said September production of 115,686 tonnes was down three per cent from August, but up 0.5 per cent from September last year. Exports during the first nine months dropped 14 per cent from year-earlier levels to 85,373 tonnes, it said. September exports fell to 97,814 tonnes from 109,605 tonnes in August and 118,268 tonnes in September 1990. Main buyers of Malaysian rubber in January-September were South Korea with 122,821 tonnes; the United States, 92,433 tonnes; Japan, 78,297 tonnes; Singapore, 63,118 tonnes; Germany, 55,241 tonnes; Italy, 49,179 tonnes and Britain, 46,997 tonnes.

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Gorbachev warns of territorial disputes if Ukraine separates.

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in an interview published Saturday, urged the Ukraine to remain within the Soviet Union and revived the suggestion that Russia could claim some of the vast republic's territory.

Mr. Gorbachev's interview with Soviet News Agency (TASS) and a newspaper in Byelorussia appeared on the eve of Ukraine's independence referendum expected to endorse separation from Moscow by a wide margin.

All six candidates in the Ukraine's presidential election, being held concurrently, appealed for a large vote in favour of independence in a live television debate Friday.

But Mr. Gorbachev, trying to stitch together a new treaty linking the 12 Soviet republics, said the election campaign was distorting the key issue — that the Ukraine's prosperity depended on remaining within a renewed union.

"I am for the self-determination within the union," he said. "We are already beginning to understand that somehow we kept putting things off and now we have to maintain our mutual action or face a break-up which would cost us dearly."

Mr. Gorbachev, who has said he cannot envisage a new union without Ukrainian participation, said the idea of independence was

"being exploited with electoral or perhaps other aims in mind which could spill over into territorial disputes."

"Let's not forget that Kharkov was joined to the Ukraine by the Bolsheviks to gain a majority in the Soviets and that the Crimea is long linked to Russian history," he said.

Mr. Gorbachev also stressed the need to protect the rights of non-indigenous minorities, saying that in some areas they were made to feel like second-class citizens. Eleven million of the Ukraine's 53 million people are ethnic Russians.

The oblique threat that the Russian federation could lay claim to large chunks of territory in the Ukraine was first unleashed by one of Soviet President Boris Yeltsin's aides just after last August's failed coup.

The suggestion that areas inhabited mainly by ethnic Russians — the industrial Donbass area and the Crimea — could be reclaimed if the republic claimed independence sent shock waves through the Ukrainian leadership.

The same mistrust of "Russian chauvinism" occurred in Kazakhstan, also home to large numbers of ethnic Russians.

A mission to both republics by Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi appeared to have put an end to the matter, but the

issue has clearly remained below the surface.

The drive for independence in the Ukraine, linked to Russia for a millennium, has taken Kremlin leaders by surprise, with Moscow only recently appearing to take the matter seriously.

Mr. Gorbachev repeated his contention this week that the Ukraine would eventually join the new union treaty.

He offended the republic's leaders by suggesting that ordinary Ukrainians disagreed with them and wanted to be part of a new union.

Mr. Yeltsin said Friday that both his republic and the Soviet Union as a whole would be dealt a heavy blow if the Ukraine pressed ahead with separation.

Mr. Gorbachev said Soviet Prime Minister Ivan Silayev would meet prime ministers of republics Monday to proceed with reforms to ease the transfer to a market-oriented economy.

In Washington, President George Bush said Friday there would be no major break with Mr. Gorbachev over the Ukraine despite plans to embrace the republic's expected independence for political activities.

Mr. Gorbachev expressed concern Thursday about news reports suggesting that Mr. Bush was prepared to recognise the Ukraine if it votes for independence, as expected, in Sunday's

ballot.

"There's not going to be a big breach here," Mr. Bush told reporters when asked about his Ukraine policy and Mr. Gorbachev's reaction while Christmas shopping in nearby Mary-



Some media reports emphasised a statement by a senior U.S. official who said after the vote the United States would move "expeditiously" towards recognition of Ukrainian independence.

But the full quote showed the official saying: "We will move expeditiously but carefully."

An administration official told Reuters Friday the expected shift in U.S. policy "doesn't mean there's going to be instant recognition or anything like that."

Granting full diplomatic recognition is expected to evolve gradually, depending on how Kiev resolves concerns over human rights, control of nuclear arms stationed in Ukraine and the status of weapons treaties agreed to by Moscow, especially the Convention on Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty signed a year ago.

Meanwhile, the six candidates competing to be the Ukraine's first directly-elected president

have put aside political differences and appealed to voters to say "yes" to independence in a referendum Sunday.

The six, taking part in a live television debate Friday night, urged voters to back the idea of full independence by a wide margin. The debate climaxed the campaign for the presidential election also taking place Sunday.

"Only as an independent state can the Ukraine become a prosperous country," said Levko Lukyanenko, leader of the Nationalist Republican Party, who spent 27 years in Soviet prisons and labour camps for political activities.

Front-runner Leonid Kuchuk, chairman of the Ukrainian parliament, also appealed for support in the referendum called to confirm an independence proclamation by parliament on Aug. 24.

Indonesian team visits sight of Timor shooting

DILI, East Timor (R) — An Indonesian commission investigating the army shooting of mourners in East Timor on Nov. 12 visited the bullet-scarred cemetery Saturday to try to reconstruct the events that led to international criticism of Jakarta.

"We wanted to see the place where it happened," said Mr. Djaelani, the dapper and soft-spoken Supreme Court judge who is heading the government enquiry into the shootings.

Accounts by witnesses and the army vary widely over what happened at the Christian cemetery in the East Timor capital of Dili, and on Friday local governor Marior Viegas Carrascalao added his voice to those doubting the official death toll of 19.

Some reports put the toll as high as 180 and several witnesses said the shooting was not provoked, as the army claims, and that troops fired for up to 20 minutes into the crowd of 3,500 mourners.

Djaelani, who denied his own military background would influence the commission's findings, said he planned to spend the day

scouring the area around the Santa Cruz Cemetery.

He and the six other members of the commission strolled past neat rows of crosses to the chapel where the firing was reported to have been concentrated.

They gazed at chapel walls now washed clean of blood, and walked on the grave of Sebastian Gomes, a young separatist whose death two weeks earlier the crowd had been mourning.

A gleaming white cross, red rose petals round its base, adorned the grave, near which blood-stained clothes, school books and shoes lie in heaps until one day after the shooting.

Earlier in the day the commission visited Motael Church where its Roman Catholic priest, Father Ricardo, pointed out to Mr. Djaelani the spot where Mr. Gomes fell dead on Oct. 28 during a clash between supporters and opponents of Indonesia's 16-year rule in this former Portuguese colony.

"I'm more or less satisfied," Mr. Ricardo said when asked how his three-hour meeting with the commission had gone.

COLUMN

Bush draws throngs on Christmas shopping expedition

WASHINGTON (R) — President George Bush joined millions of other Americans Friday in an annual ritual that is crucial to the U.S. economy — he began his Christmas shopping. Mr. Bush and his wife Barbara travelled from their presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland to a nearby shopping centre where they searched for gifts for their grandchildren. Mr. Bush was greeted with shrieks of delight from other shoppers. The president signed autographs, shook dozens of hands and generally created pandemonium. The cutting out Mr. Bush in touch with several hundred regular middle-class Americans, and if they are blaming him for the country's economic downturn, they didn't show it. "Give the Democrats hell" shouted one shopper to the obviously delighted Republican president as he shopped at the J.C. Penney department store at Frederick Town Mall. It was doubtless a morale booster for the president, whose approval rating in opinion polls has fallen to about 50 per cent from a historic high of 90 per cent during the Gulf war early this year.

Boeing 747 struck by lightning

ISLAMABAD (R) — A British Airways Boeing 747 was struck by lightning and damaged as it came into land at the Pakistani capital, an airline spokesman said Saturday. Nobody was hurt in the incident Friday but the left wing and the aircraft's electronic system were damaged. "The pilot skilfully managed to land the plane in safety," the spokesman said. The return flight to Britain was delayed by 24 hours because spare parts had to be flown from Saudi Arabia.

Duke's picture found to be Raphael

LONDON (R) — A "lost" painting by the 16th century master Raphael worth more than £20 million (\$36 million) has been found hanging on the wall of an English castle. Newspapers Saturday called the discovery of the work, the Madonna and Child, a "miracle." Diplomats and hospital sources said at least 25 people were killed in violence that for the most part pitted young pro-democracy demonstrators against members of Mr. Eyadema's Kabyle tribe.

"We have pulled out of all strategic points of the capital except the radio station," the armed forces said in a communiqué read by an army officer on Togolese radio and monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

But the soldiers said they were still calling for the dissolution of the High Council of the Republic (HCR), a transitional governing assembly appointed after a national conference on democratic reform.

The soldiers took over the radio and television stations and encircled the prime minister's office after the HCR banned Mr. Eyadema's former ruling party, the Rally of the Togolese People (RPT).

The three-day military power play was the closest yet that the army has come to reversing a democratic reform movement which this year effectively stripped Mr. Eyadema of most of his power after 24 years of authoritarian military rule.

Soldiers on previous occasions have occupied the radio and television and attempted to kidnap

OAS chief criticises Haiti call for new elections

CARTAGENA, Colombia (R) — The head of the Organisation of American States (OAS) Friday criticised a decision by Haiti's military-backed government to call elections to replace ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

"I think that this does not contribute to a solution like the one we were hoping for from the negotiations which are underway," OAS Secretary-General Joao Baena Soares told reporters in the Colombian resort of Cartagena.

A government which emerged from the current de facto regime would not be recognised, Mr. Baena Soares said.

He said the OAS had adopted two resolutions calling for the return of Mr. Aristide, overthrown in a military coup on Sept. 30 months after being elected with a big majority.

A government which emerged from the current de facto regime would not be recognised, Mr. Baena Soares said.

He said he hoped the election

call by provisional Prime Minister Jean-Jacques Honorat would not create a situation which hindered negotiations on the Haiti crisis.

Togo troops obey president, quit all but radio station

LOMÉ (R) — Togolese soldiers

said at least 25 people were killed in violence that for the most part pitted young pro-democracy demonstrators against members of Mr. Eyadema's Kabyle tribe.

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Khmer Rouge proposes council meet in rebel areas

BANGKOK (R) — The Khmer Rouge, whose leaders were beaten up and sent packing from the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh earlier this week, proposed Saturday that the country's provisional National Council should meet in guerrilla territory.

The Khmer Rouge proposal, broadcast on clandestine radio monitored in Bangkok, pledged to "ensure full security for all SNC members and representatives of other countries who took part in the meeting, and provide accommodation and food to everyone."

It appeared highly unlikely the Phnom Penh government would accept the offer.

Khmer Rouge President Khiem Samphan was beaten by an angry crowd and his villa ransacked Wednesday only hours after he returned to the city for the first time since the group's brutal 1975-79 rule.

His assailants: baying for revenge for relatives who perished under the fanatical Communist government, which was driven into the jungle by a Vietnamese invasion and re-emerged to fight the Phnom Penh government.

The SNC was supposed to have its first meeting on Cambodian soil next week but the venue has now been switched to Pattaya, Thailand, following the ignominious flight of Mr. Khiem Samphan, defence chief Son Sen and their delegation.

In a letter to U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar Mr. Khiem Samphan said the incident seriously threatened the

peace agreement, which would collapse if the council was unable to function properly because of lack of security.

But the Khmer Rouge have also expressed their commitment to making the accord work and want to try to return to Phnom Penh once more.

The pact is aimed at ending more than a decade of war between the Vietnamese-installed government and the three-party guerrilla alliance, which has splintered since the accord was signed.

A big U.N. peacekeeping force is to be deployed until elections are held in early 1993 while in the meantime the SNC would embody national sovereignty under the chairmanship of Prince Sihanouk, the former king, ruler and guerrilla leader.

So far only a small vanguard of peacekeepers is in place. French and Australian soldiers have withdrawn from the Western town of Battambang, where they were fixing up communications, in case of an outbreak of fighting sparked by Wednesday's truce.

China holds Phnom Penh authorities responsible for the mob attack on leaders of the Khmer Rouge, the official People's Daily said Saturday.

A long commentary in the newspaper was the strongest statement Peking has made about responsibility for the attacks on

Mr. Khiem Samphan and Mr. Son Sen.

"It was by no means accidental and the Phnom Penh side can in no way shift its responsibility for the incident," a lengthy commentator said.

China was the main supplier of weapons to the Communist Khmer Rouge during the Cambodian civil war, and gave shelter to Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who now heads the SNC.

Peking is now forging close links with Phnom Penh Prime Minister Hun Sen.

The commentary said Phnom Penh must ensure the safety of all members of the SNC.

"As the SNC headquarters is located in Phnom Penh, people have all the more reason to demand that the Phnom Penh side guarantees their normal work free from any disturbances," the commentator said.

Peace in Cambodia depended on the participation of all members of the SNC.

"The Cambodian issue cannot possibly be settled, nor can peace and stability be maintained so long as one side of Cambodia is excluded in the settlement," the commentator said.

If the coalition members to "give up their old grudges," and work together to rebuild Cambodia.

